



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

For immediate release
March 1, 2007

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Nine Virginians receive Governor's Caregiver Recognition Award

Love and dedication to loved ones keep them going

Richmond, VA — Their faces may be different, but their stories are very much the same – they are all deeply committed to voluntarily providing care for their loved ones.

Nine outstanding caregivers from throughout the Commonwealth received the Governor's Volunteer Caregiver Recognition Award in a ceremony on Feb. 21, 2007. The annual awards program, in its second year, is sponsored by the Virginia Council on the Status of Women. Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Commissioner Anthony Conyers, Jr., members of the Virginia General Assembly and representatives from the Virginia Council on the Status of Women attended the ceremony to honor this year's recipients and the more than one million unpaid caregivers within Virginia.

"The Caregiver Award symbolically honors the thousands of Virginia caregivers who lovingly take care of family and friends day-after-day. Although the award is only given to a few caregivers, it serves as a reminder of the tremendous contributions all caregivers within the Commonwealth make," Conyers said.

These caregivers are part of a growing trend across the country and the Commonwealth. Virginia ranks 12th in the nation in the number of family caregivers, with a total of nearly 700,000 people caring for relatives.

This year's recipient's included:

- Jean Beckett of Virginia Beach, who has been a caregiver since 1980, assisting her mother, father, grandmother and adult stepdaughter
- Henry Tyson of Hampton, who at nearly 90, has cared for ailing wife for seven years
- Carolyn Seward of Richmond, who put her career aside to aid seven young family members, including two who have developmental disabilities
- Barbara Matheny of Hopewell, who, despite her own health problems, cares for her ill daughter and four young grandchildren
- Valerie Logan of Richmond, who has been the sole caregiver of her daughter, who was born prematurely at just 29 weeks, weighing only two pounds

- Loretta Stapleton of Big Stone Gap, who provides round-the-clock care for her mother, who is battling Alzheimer's Disease
- Karen Cockrell of Front Royal, who has provided care for dozens of abused, neglected, abandoned and runaway children, as well as those in transition from foster homes or whose family situation does not allow for care by a relative
- Irene Imbrongo of Lynchburg, who provides constant care for her husband in his battle with progressive Alzheimer's Disease
- John Blanks of Richmond, who has become the primary caregiver for his mother and grandmother since his father passed away

Nationally, it is estimated there are more than 44 million volunteer caregivers. The need for such individuals is expected to increase throughout the next 25 years as the population grows and ages. The Governor's Volunteer Caregiver Award recognizes and honors those who lovingly and voluntarily provide care for family and friends and is intended to publicly celebrate their contributions, as well as bring awareness to the issue of volunteer caregiving.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov>

http://www.dss.virginia.gov/community/council_women/caregiver.html

http://www.dss.virginia.gov/news/2007/caregiver_bios.pdf

http://www.dss.virginia.gov/news/2007/pr_caregivers_03-01-2007.pdf

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/as/caregiver.html>

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Editor's note: Interviews and additional photos available upon request.